



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2119

Mitt Romney
GOVERNOR

Kerry Healey
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Stephen R. Pritchard
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

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CONTACT: Corbie Kump
617-626-1119

**SECRETARY PRITCHARD JOINS PUBLIC, PRIVATE PARTNERS TO CELEBRATE
MAJOR PARK & WATER RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS IN WESTFIELD**

***\$500K Grant Assists with Renovation of Municipal Playground and State Commits to
Partnership with Westfield on Construction of New Spray Park***

Environmental Affairs Secretary Stephen Pritchard today joined elected officials and community leaders at Municipal Playground in Westfield to celebrate a \$500,000 grant to assist the City of Westfield with major improvements to the playground. In addition to the grant announcement, those in attendance celebrated the continued commitment by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to partner with the City to construct a new spray pool park near the former Veteran's Memorial Pool.

"One of the best ways to improve quality of life in Massachusetts is to help our communities restore and maintain their recreation facilities," said Secretary Pritchard. "I am excited to be a part of making Municipal Playground an expanded and safer part of the Westfield community, and to be upholding our commitment to helping the City construct a great new place for water recreation."

Municipal Playground is the only multi-use, all-age playground located in Westfield's downtown area. This \$500,000 grant will assist with the total \$750,000 reconstruction cost. Deteriorated and outdated playground elements have been removed and new state-of-the-art improvements have been made, including:

- Reconstruction of horseshoe pit
- Doubling of parking spaces to 76 total
- Resurfacing of basketball courts
- Tennis court refurbishment
- Spray pool installation
- Replacement of the pavilion and bath facilities
- New picnic area
- New play equipment

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' Urban Self-Help Program assists cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. This grant advances Governor Romney's Smart Growth initiative by making significant investments in outdoor recreational facilities where improvements are most needed.

Today's celebration also marked EOE's commitment to work with the City of Westfield and its legislators to remove Veteran's Memorial Pool – an outdated and nonfunctioning pool facility – and assist the City with the construction of a new spray pool nearby.

"In 2004, it was apparent that Westfield's Veteran's Pool would be unable to reopen," said Senator Michael Knapik. "While that news was certainly unfortunate, we saw this Municipal Playground and Spray Park renovation project as an opportunity to more effectively provide summer recreation opportunities for the families who live in the downtown neighborhoods," he continued. "This project has been a true partnership between the state and local government."

"I am delighted and very grateful to Secretary Pritchard for joining us to celebrate the progress of this special project. Everyone appreciates the need for, and importance of, the new spray park and revitalizing this area will mean so much to this neighborhood, downtown, the whole city...it's very exciting," said Representative Donald Humason.

"Westfield is very excited about upgrading our Municipal Playground which will benefit the whole community. This project has truly been a team effort with Mayor Sullivan, Senator Knapik, Representative Humason and the State of Massachusetts," said Brian Sullivan, President, Westfield City Council.

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